

From: Quality & Service Engineer [QSENG@dealers.bmwna.com]
Sent: Thursday, August 22, 2002 2:50 PM
To: DCS 2000 Server
Subject: Recall to Reprogram E46 Side Airbags-Recall Campaign 02V-223

To:
BMW Service Managers
BMW Parts Managers
BMW Sales Managers

Subject: Recall to Reprogram E46 Side Airbags - Recall Campaign 02V-223

BMW of North America has informed the NHTSA that it will be proceeding with a customer notification to recall certain E46 vehicles. The recall affects approximately 20,500 323i and 328i vehicles produced between 04/1999 and 08/1999. The implementation of the recall will be conducted as soon as the repair procedures are finalized (which should take 4-6 weeks). At that time, a Service Information bulletin will be published, and official customer notification letters will be mailed. The repair will consist of a recalibration of the software in the airbag control module.

In the meantime, we have prepared the following Q&A to help address any customer questions:

Frequently Asked Questions, Recall Campaign 02V-223

Q1 Which models are affected by the recall?

A: E46 3 Series 323i and 328i Sedan produced 04/1999 to 08/1999. These vehicles were not affected by any previous side airbag recall.

Q2 How many vehicles are affected?

A: Approximately 20,500 vehicles in the US.

Q3: Why is this recall being issued?

A: The recall involves the side airbag system of your car. The system may deploy in certain non-crash impacts, such as experienced when contacting large potholes or curbs at substantial speed. This could cause the side airbags and Head Protection Systems of the vehicle to deploy without an actual side crash or impact severe enough to cause significant visible damage to the vehicle.

Q4: What is the purpose of side airbag system installed in my car?

A: The side airbag system consists of a door mounted airbag, and a Head Protection System (HPS).

The door-mounted airbags deploy just above the armrest to help protect the torso in a severe side impact.

HPS is an inflatable restraint intended to help provide the driver and front passenger with head protection in a severe side impact. HPS works together with the front door-mounted side airbags, and other features such as BMW's interlocking door anchoring system, to help provide optimum side impact protection.

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Q5: What could happen if my side airbag deploys unnecessarily?

A: Unnecessary deployment of the side airbag system could cause serious injury if the occupant's head is resting near any side airbag.

In addition, the Battery Safety Terminal (BST) would also activate, disconnecting the starter cable from the battery. In this case, vehicle electrical systems would continue to operate and the engine would continue to run but, after stopping, could not be restarted.

Q6: Are there any precautions that should be taken when seated next to a side airbag?

A: For vehicles equipped with side airbags, all occupants should be properly restrained (children in appropriate child restraint systems, larger children and adults using the safety belts) and sitting upright. Never let an occupant's head rest near any side airbag. If this warning is not heeded, the inflating airbag could cause a serious or fatal injury.

For all children 12 years old and younger, NHTSA and BMW recommend they ride in the rear seat. This recommendation is based on the fact that the rear is the safest place for every passenger.

Q7: When will I receive my notification letter?

A: Mailings are scheduled to begin by the end of September 2002.

Q8: What will be done to fix my car, and how long will it take to repair?

A: The remedy will consist of recalibrating the central airbag control module to reduce sensitivity to these non-crash impacts. This modification will require approximately one hour and will be performed free of charge. Additional time may be required, depending on the BMW center's scheduling and processing. Contact your BMW center for an appointment once you receive your notification letter.

Q9: Do I have to wait for my recall letter to have the recall performed?

A: Yes. BMW is currently developing the necessary software to perform the recall. Owners will be notified as soon as the fix is available.

Q10: Can customers continue to drive their vehicles?

A: Yes, however certain precautions should be taken before the repair is performed. Caution should be exercised when encountering rough roads, potholes, curbs, etc. In such conditions, proceed carefully, avoiding excessive speed and severe bumps.

All occupants should always be properly restrained (children in appropriate child restraint systems, larger children and adults using safety belts) and sitting upright. Never let an occupant's head rest near any side airbag.

Do not lean towards or against a door with a side airbag.

Refer to the appropriate safety information in your Owner's Manual (see pages 54-60) and the BMW Safety Tips card. Observe the warnings contained in the airbag warning labels on your car.

If you are not the sole driver of your car, please advise all other drivers of these possible consequences.

Q11: Can I have my side airbag deactivated?

No, you cannot have your front side airbags and Head Protection Systems deactivated on the vehicles involved in this recall. However, if your vehicle is equipped with optional rear side airbags, they can be deactivated. Contact your local BMW center for more information.